

HOW PUBLISHERS DESCRIBE SEASON

Good Books Are Selling as Well as Ever, All Agree.

BAD BOOKS DON'T "GO" Sincerity Is Now the Biggest Element of Literary Success.

FIND NO SPECIAL TREND

It's No Longer a Day of the Best Seller, but of the Best Author.

This is one of the most interesting and promising seasons on record in the book publishing business on many counts, according to the publishers' reports. Herewith are presented some statements bearing out the fact, especially prepared for THE SUN by the various houses.

By DOUBLEDAY, PAGE & CO.

Good books are selling just as well as ever, and it's a little harder than ever to make a popular success out of a bad book. Sincerity has come to be the biggest element of success. The novel that can make the pavement treader feel his kinship with the field has a better chance than stories of imaginary kingdoms, of careless beauty or of intricate mental processes. For nearly a year Gene Stratton-Porter's "Harvester" has been the best selling book in the world—convincing statistics are available for America—and its basis is sincerity. Then Mrs. Munger's book, "The Wind Before the Dawn," has delivered its message to so many people so soon simply because the author, hitherto unknown, has written sincerely and frankly of the things that are more important even than her suffrage to the housekeeping woman. Books of real humor are, as always, rare and popular "when found." As Irvin Cobb says, imitations of O. Henry continue to sprout—but close to shore—and there are few real humorists. After you have mentioned Montague Glass and George Ade and Irvin Cobb and half a dozen others the count is done.

"After election" is a phrase we shall soon be giving up. For years it has been firmly established as a sort of blind of present pessimism and future mild hope in business. This fall general business conditions, it is everywhere conceded, are very, very good and the book trade has been strengthening for many weeks, independent of next month's events. "After election" ought to be an excuse for postponement and not a reason for anything in the world. The public demands not only more honest novels, but more non-fiction books that are helpful and informational. Every publisher who is trying to build up a list of permanent value is looking more and more eagerly for books like Prof. Jenks' "Trust Problem" or James Munroe's "New Demands in Education" or Bouck White's "The Call of the Carpenter," probably the most talked-of non-fiction book of the last two years. Booksellers as well as the public are glad to welcome the steady selling non-fiction book. It is up to the publisher to raise his standards and keep it there. The public will reward him—and the bookseller.

Frederick A. Stokes Company.

A tendency which is distinctly noticeable this season is the evident desire of booksellers to cooperate with publishers in advancing the sales of books. Where window displays of books will help them have been receiving offers to make them. Where some special effort can be made through a bookman to reach a class that would be natural customers for a book the efforts have been willingly extended. This year not only is there a better spirit of cooperation, but booksellers apparently are better able to do special work in that they are more prosperous. They are even discounting their bills to a greater extent than they did in 1911, and 1911 was better in this respect than the three years preceding.

The bookseller, too, is permitting his individual taste to influence him in giving displays, let us say, to certain books. He is, I think, using better than ever his opportunity to advise his customers. It is curious how different the booksellers take likings to different books. This year we have had some booksellers insist that they want to push Richard Dehan's "Between Two Thieves" because they regarded it as a great book which their customers ought to read. Others like the homely sentiment of "The Bride's Hero," by M. P. Revere (a pen name), by the way, for a well known novelist), and because of its big commercial possibilities wish to push that. Others have even taken special interest in volumes of short stories, think of it, Miss Gaskell seems to have several good friends among the booksellers who delight to do all they can for her books, even if the volume should be short stories, as is the case with "Lifted Masks," just published. There is a bookseller in Cleveland and also one in Chicago who have taken great fancy to the beautiful volumes on "Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art," by Fenollosa, and insist on keeping that to the fore with their art customers. Of course wherever a bookseller has many customers who are school teachers, he keeps asking us for material to help him push "The Montessori Method."

This is a very wholesome tendency, because it is bound to stimulate book reading. As to the publications of the autumn, the most noticeable fact is the smaller number of novels. Let us hope that this is due, in part at least, to the efforts of publishers to issue fewer books and better ones. We hear frequently statements that the public is more interested this fall in serious books. It is too early yet to decide whether the public will take to the serious books for this autumn or not. It is doubtful if among the many excellent titles announced there can be such popular favorites as those of last spring and of the year before, such as Mary Antin's "The Promised Land," "The Montessori Method," Olive Schreiner's "Woman and Labor" or Miss Jane Adams' book. These very books will

continue to sell in large numbers throughout this winter. They may even retain their position as best selling serious books against the newcomers.

Returning to fiction, one is bound to be struck by the absence from the list of best sellers of the names we were familiar with four or five years ago and the prominence in these lists of people who were comparatively unknown two years ago. The last report of best sellers as given in the *Bookman* contains the names of Davies, Day, Stratton-Porter and Kester, with two published anonymously, "The Street Called Straight" and "To M. L. G."

It is too early to say just who will be included in the best sellers for this winter, but it is safe to say that new names will predominate and that of these new names many will be American. Every one of the best selling novels in the last list published by the *Bookman* is by an American and on an American subject. Among our own authors frequently mentioned because of their popularity are, of course, the two rising young women authors, Miss Susan Glaspell and Miss Edna Ferber, and Owen Johnson, whose "Stover at Yale" was received with such earnestness by the American public that he at once became a figure to be reckoned with.

We observe one tendency which publishers generally will be glad to see continue, namely, the passing from favor of the fanciful colored jacket which has been so prominent in bookshops for the last two years. Colored jackets on American novels have been vastly more artistic and attractive and also better printed than those on English covers, but if the buying public and the booksellers do not want them there will be few but cover artists to mourn the loss.

By Houghton, Mifflin Company.

It seems to be the best business opinion that politics, even tripartite politics, is not this year doing any damage to general business. Certainly this is true with the selling of books. In any case, one of the permanent peculiarities of publishing is that, while it is of course not unaffected by trade conditions, the basic public demand for books is likely to run counter to the curve of demand for so-called staple commodities. The quickening of the public mind that comes in Presidential years—even in panic years—has often been shown to have as one of its effects a marked increase in the reading habit. This is strongly evidenced in the fall season of 1912. We are ourselves publishing the longest and we believe the best list in the history of the house. The interest of the press and public in the books already issued and the preliminary interest of the book stores in the books about to be issued assure us that this is a year in which good books are going to have the success that they deserve—something that doesn't always happen.

So far as we can judge the publishing tendencies of the season from our own list and the study of those of other publishers, we should say that in fiction novels of serious intention and real ability will hold a more prominent place than ever before. Children's books will give evidence of the increasing attractiveness that has marked this class of publication for the last four or five years. There will be seen, we believe, a revival of interest in the literary essay, helped, no doubt, by the fact that such popular writers in this form as Samuel McChord Crothers, Agnes Repplier, Bliss Perry, Meredith Nicholson and John Burroughs are to be represented in the fall list. The fall season is not, apparently, going to boast as many books of the first importance in the fields of biography and history as last year, when the "Diary of Gideon Welles" and William Roscoe Thayer's monumental "Life of Cavour" held the stage. There will, however, we believe, be noticed a marked increase in the number and significance of studies of economic and social questions. The quickening of public consciences in these lines and the increasing desire to read authoritative discussions of social questions, we believe, one of the most notable publishing phenomena of the present day. Such books as Fagan's "Autobiography of an Individualist," R. M. Johnston's "The Holy Christian Church," Dr. Rosenau's "The Milk Question," Thomas R. George's last work, "The Weaver's Story," "Citizens Made and Ruined," Bacon and Wyman's "Direct Election," and Law-Making by Popular Vote," Havelock Ellis's "The Task of Social Hygiene," Prof. Lyon's "Capitalization," A. B. C. on Corporation Finance, Prof. Dealey's "The Family in Its Sociological Aspects"—selected at random from our own list—indicate something of the richness of the fall season's publications in this field.

By Harper & Brothers.

An analysis of the Harper output for the season reveals perhaps more than the usual number of serious books, with biographies and reminiscences leading the list.

In this class, of course, by far the most important work is the three volume biography of Mark Twain which has just been finished by Albert Bigelow Paine after seven years of steady work. This is unquestionably the most important of the Harper publications during the present year.

The Harper fiction represents an even wider variety of choice than for several seasons past. Rex Beach, Irving Bacheller, Margaret Cameron, Holman Day, Will Harden, William Dana Orcutt, Booth Tarkington and a number of other authors of equal prominence are a few of those who have united to make the fall list of unusual interest. In this list there are also books from two or three new authors and there is good reason for believing that the originality and freshness of those productions will meet with instant appreciation.

Juveniles, too, figure prominently at this time of the year, and the recent tendency to give children their story books in artistic holiday dress has resulted in the expenditure of much more than the usual amount for the purpose of illuminating these books in the manner best adapted to the cultivation of the child's artistic taste.

It is probable, however, that no class of books has received more attention in respect to mechanical perfection than the holiday editions themselves. By the aid of such authors as Margaret Deland, Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, Richard Le Gallienne and Peter Newell, each preoccupied with his own line of effort, the Harpers feel that they have quite satisfactorily covered the field of holiday gift books, especially as the books of those authors are handsomely illustrated, some of them in color, and all have been particularly designed to meet the requirements of the fastidious holiday trade.

By Moffat, Yard and Company.

Moffat, Yard and Company are not aware of any special trend in fiction. We believe that any well written, interesting story is likely to sell. This is equally true of the

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so-called problem story, the story of adventure or of romance.

The public at present seems to prefer novels of the present day with their scenes laid in this country, but the fact that Kauffman's realistic studies of social conditions, viz., "The House of Bondage" and "The Sentence of Silence," sold largely, while J. C. Smith's delightful whimsicalities dealing with English life have steady and large sales, proves the contention stated above, namely, that a well written and interesting story is bound to sell. Books of travel, good biographies and books of romance always have a steady, quiet sale.

In planning our fall list we always endeavor to have books for all tastes and ages. In fiction this fall we have a wide and interesting range:

Mrs. Louise Closser Hale's "Her Soul and Her Body," a remarkable analysis of a young girl's life; Miss Simonton's virile and powerful picture of West Africa, its lure and its fatal spell; Mr. Perley Mead's story of cheerful optimism, "The Seed," Albert Britton's "Wind Will," which is a straightforward and charming, wholesome story of American life to-day, and "A Christmas Honey-moon," by Frances Aymar Mathews, a tender, graceful and romantic story.

The popular magazine and the automobile and all that this latter implies no doubt have interfered with the large sales of the past, but good fiction and substantial books dealing with the problems of the day will always find a satisfactory audience.

By John Lane Company.

John Lane Company has perhaps never in previous years had so diversified a list of publications as it is putting out this autumn. It affords an opportunity to readers of all classes.

As regards the fiction, some of its best known authors have produced work of the highest quality. Mr. Horace W. C. Newte, who made a name for himself some years ago by "Sparrows" and "The Sins of the Children," has written a story which depicts the hardship, danger and pathos of a country girl's life as a stranger alone and penniless in a great city and touches upon the white slave traffic. Dolf Wyllarde, who has long been a favorite with the Reddy Head readers, has lost none of her characteristic piquancy of style, as her latest production, "The Career of Beauty Darling," goes to show.

For the book hunter who seeks diversion and a respite from daily cares come "The Joyous Adventures of Aristide Pujol," forming a climax to Mr. William J. Locke's novels of diverting Gallic experiences. In the same merry mood are the "Sunshine Sketches" of Stephen Leacock, who, though occupying the serious post of professor of economics and political science at the University of McGill, Montreal, Canada, can produce in his leisure hours the most humorous stories ever written.

Among the serious books is the record of the personal experiences of a woman who, left with very moderate means after the sudden death of her husband and having two small children to support and educate, started to use her pen with such wonderful results that she produced thirteen books in as many years. Her latest work, entitled "Thirteen Years of a Busy Woman's Life," though a record of these experiences, is not strictly autobiographical, but gives interesting incidents in the lives of well known men of both continents, among whom are Col. Roosevelt, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Lord Strathcona and many others. The author (Mrs. Alec Tweedie) will pay a visit to this country later in this month and will lecture in some of our principal cities.

The lover of the mystery story has not been forgotten in the preparation of the John Lane Company list. "Face of Air," by George L. Knapp, is a sailor's yarn that one reads with suspended breath from start to finish.

By B. W. Huebsch.

Contentment may safely be regarded as an indication of stagnation, and for that reason I take a modest satisfaction in having been called "the publisher of discontent" by one of my confidants. I am so certain that a rosy glow of happy prophecy will suffuse your symposium on the literary outlook that, in spite of the improvement in business, I am not unwilling to create discord by contributing a note of healthy pessimism.

Again and again I have said that we have no real reading public and that an appreciation of the good and the beautiful is confined to a limited few. I brush away as unworthy of consideration the so-called best sellers, for which neither their authors nor their publishers have real respect.

Let a thoughtful book by a French philosopher—to select a random example—run through two or three editions, and the whole country marvels. The Sunday papers print his picture and interview him on every possible subject ranging in importance from baseball down. Abroad the phenomenon is viewed more complacently because it is commoner. A man with a message gets a hearing because there is a cultivated public prepared to consider it.

We need that cultivated public here, but in order to get it we must combat deliberate pandering to lower instincts, whatever the field in which it is practiced. It makes for ignorance and erects an obstacle to progress.

Without wishing to depart from generalizations, let me direct your attention to our magazines. One monthly that represented more successfully than any in years social progress and high literary tone has been forced to obliterate its individuality to enter the competition for conventional "success," while another

which embodies unselfish ideals and has commanded self-sacrificing talent is facing defeat.

The average bookseller hesitates to buy a dozen copies of a purely intellectual work, knowing that his community will not support his investment. Many works that have cost years of preparation—adequate presentations of worthy subjects—fail to sell as many as a thousand copies. Only the exceptions pay their expenses. I leave you to answer why.

Among a population of a hundred million we have but a few thousand book-sellers, most of whom still ride to work in street cars. The America of the future will have as many booksellers as boot-sellers. You see, I am hopeful. Generations to come will recognize that the head is as important as the feet. I hear my cynical friend answer that haters will flourish, but I answer that haters should cover more than empty heads.

And all this to what end? The recognition by publishers of the responsibility of their calling; of the immorality of their doing up unworthy books; of the educational value of the books which they are engaged in producing; of the university which (Carlyle spoke), even when their aim is to supply merely entertaining literature.

Oh, yes, as to this fall. Well, not as bad as other seasons; there seem to be fewer books.

By George H. Doran Company.

One of the most noticeable features of this year's publishing, judging from the fall lists of the different publishers, is a broadening of book selling. This is not the day of the "best seller," but the day of the best author. There are fewer sensational and showy books, but many that can be made companions and are worthy of being read more than once.

Our comprehensive list of this sort particularly illustrates this. Here we have both variety and quality. Not only are standard favorites like Ralph Connor, Conan Doyle, Justin Huntly McCarthy, Baroness Orczy represented by new books of conscientious endeavor, but names new to the book world stand sponsors for books that will undoubtedly arouse interest for sheer merit's sake.

The Doran list might be best described as international, for it is drawn upon many nations. England is represented by that premier living writer of mystery fiction, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, whose latest novel is called "The Lost World"; by Justin Huntly McCarthy with a slashing cavalry romance, "A Health Unto His Majesty"; Gilbert Frankau, son of Frank Danby, already popular in America, in one of the smartest concoits of half a century, a novel in verse entitled "Jack—One of Us"; by Arnold Bennett and Edward Knatchbull in plays written separately and in collaboration, etc.; Ireland, by G. A. Birmingham, who from his little corner of Ireland sends out "Priscilla's Spies" and "The Major's Niece"; Canada, by Ralph Connor, whose latest novel, "Corporal Cameron," and former one, make up the story history of the great Northwest; France, by Marguerite Audoux, who first startled the reading world with "Marie Claire" and now offers "Valerine" and other feminine types peculiar to her own country; Alphonse de Chateaubriant, whose remarkable novel "The Keynote" was awarded the Prix Goncourt as being the greatest piece of French imaginative writing of the year; Hungary, by Emma, Baroness Orczy who came into greater fame when she gave to the world "The Scarlet Pimpernel," that classic of romantic fiction. Her remarkable versatility, however, finds expression in a new, picturesque and beautiful story of the nineteenth century, "Meadowweet." Coming home we find two Southern writers who will undoubtedly win wide recognition—Irvine S. Cobb, who writes of the real life of a Southern community in "Back Home, A Narrative of Judge Priest and His People," and Helen S. Woodruff, whose character sketches of the plantation negro places her story "Miss Beauty" along with Uncle Remus.

Finally, there is James Montgomery Flagg, who has the story telling faculty both with pen and pencil to a rare degree. His "Adventures of Kitty Cobb" is distinctly the clever book of the season. One of the most noticeable features of this year's publishing is the presence of many new authors. The new author in himself is not exceptional—every author has to be a new author at one time or another. The fact that is significant is that publishers are taking new talent seriously—quietly and persistently they are introducing new names to the public, not in single volumes but in collected editions—for the new author may have been writing many years before he is discovered.

The method of the introduction is different also as regards the advertising; the publisher is staking his judgment by announcing why he made his discovery. This means that publishers are trying to form public opinion rather than follow it—and the season's results prove the soundness of the policy, for the standard of real merit has gone up. There are fewer sensational and showy books, but many that can be made companions and are eminently fitted to be read more than once.

The merely manufactured product of an immediate salable value is losing its popularity. Experience has proved that the glorified and overplanned pot boiler does not last; the literary artist—the man who works with a conscience—gives better returns for the publisher's effort. The literary craftsman has a future. The publisher shows signs of preferring to gamble on his literary rather than his purely financial judgment. This means better books for the public and a fair chance for the author with high stand-

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ards whose work has failed to attract attention.

By the Macmillan Company.

It's a more or less common supposition that the fall of a Presidential election is bound to be a bad year for book publishing, but such a statement cannot be made this year so far as the Macmillan Company is concerned. The fall list from this house is larger than usual and many of the books which have been published have already gained a firm foothold. For example, out of the six novels which have so far appeared three are already in their second edition, though none of them dates further back than the third week in September, and the other three are well on the way toward a second edition. Also books of a more serious nature are enjoying popularity. Perhaps this is due in a measure to the interest in the political campaign, for "Government by All the People," by Delos F. Wilcox; "The Control of Trusts," by John Bates Clark; "The New Immigration," by Peter Roberts, and "Child Labor in City Streets," by Edward N. Closser, are all on subjects more or less connected with the politics of to-day. Each of these books has attracted unusual attention.

There seems to be an striking characteristic about the fiction demands, at least the demands made upon the Macmillan Company. The public to which they are catering would appear to have thrown over the problem novel, the novel of questionable tastes or morals, and to have demanded in their place wholesome stories, or stories of simple, homely life in which a sane, optimistic or cheerful philosophy is advanced. Thus among the most popular books which this company has put out in the past two months are Kathleen Norris's "The Rich Man, Burgoine," Martin Redfield's "My Love and I," and Edward V. Lucas's "London Lavender." These all have to do with the everyday world and everyday people. Other books yet to be published, which will further meet this same demand, are Alice Brown's "The Secret of the Clan," and Zola Gale's "Christmas," both reflecting a kindly outlook.

By The Century Company.

The notable feature of the Century Company's 1912 fall output is a strong list of fiction by writers whose names are powers in the publishing world—Alice Hegan Rice, Frances Little, Jack London, Maurice Hewitt.

Alice Hegan Rice's new book, "A Romance of Billy-Got Hill," is a larger canvas than anything she has yet attempted, and has lost nothing of the quaint humor that endeared "Mrs. Wiggs" to so many thousands. Frances Little's

long awaited sequel to "The Lady of the Decoration" relates the later adventures of "the Lady" and Jack in letters just as delightful as the earlier ones, and there is the romance of a bewitching Japanese girl in the story too, as the title, "The Lady and Sada San," indicates. Jack London has gone back to the field of his first success, the Klondike, in "Smoke-Bellow," and has never written better. Maurice Hewitt's "Mrs. Lancelot" is set in the Georgian period. It is the story of the love of three men for an elusive beautiful woman, and the story is told with Hewitt's characteristic fire and passion. Added to these four notable issues of fiction are Jean Webster's "Daddy-Long-Legs," Arthur Train's "C. Q.," a clever, sparkling romance of the Wireless House, and a new and powerful novel, "The Prelude to Adventure," by Hugh Walpole, the English writer whose "The Gods and Mr. Porter" ranked last year as a novel of unusual worth and promise. In "Daddy-Long-Legs" Jean Webster of clever pen, inherited perhaps from the great Mark Twain, whose grandniece she is, tells the story of a young orphan sent to college by an anonymous benefactor. The girl's letters to the unknown are rich in whimsical humor.

Of other books in the Century Company's fall list, Helen Nicolay contributes a valuable new Lincoln book, "Personal Traits of Abraham Lincoln," and Virginia Robie has written for all collectors in "By-Paths in Collecting." Dr. Maurice Francis Egan's "Everybody's St. Francis" has many exquisite illustrations in color and black, by M. Maurice Boutet de Monvel, and Clayton Sedgwick Cooper's "Why Go to College" and William C. Redfield's "The New Industrial Day" discuss authoritatively life problems.

By L. C. Page and Company.

Boston, Oct. 16.—Miss Mae V. Lebert of the firm of L. C. Page & Co., Inc., regards the business outlook for publishers as very bright. She says: "The outlook is indeed a promising one. With such leaders as a new Little Colonel book, 'Mary Ware's Promised Land,' by the well loved Annie Fellows Johnston, for juvenile readers; 'Chronicles of Avonlea,' from the pen of the famous L. M. Montgomery, whose 'Anne of Green Gables' has become a household word; 'Miss Billy's Decision,' a sequel to the popular 'Miss Billy,' by Eleanor H. Porter, not to mention several attractive non-fiction titles offered for adult readers, we seem to be pleasing the public pretty well."

"Books of a serious nature, works on travel and art, are now more than ever before enjoying a demand with the general reader as well as with the 'high-

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brow class." Travel books which prove strong reader titles and which can command as large a sale as the popular novel of the day are indeed books extraordinary, but the volumes in our Spell Series, "The Spell of France," &c., are having just that sort of a sale.

"Particularly in our selection of fiction have we heeded the cry of 'fewer books and better.' The day of the novel with the thrills in every line and climax in every chapter is over and fiction to succeed to-day must be decidedly worth while reading as well as pleasurable reading. It was with this thought in mind perhaps that our editors picked Will Allen Dromgoole's 'The Island of Beautiful Things' for a winner." Miss Dromgoole enjoys a following among juvenile readers and is well known for other literary efforts, but this was her first novel. The story is of the simple, quiet and sweet type. Our business department hesitated. "But," pointed out our editors, "surely all the chords of love, sentiment, religion, sweetness, purity and duty are struck. The book carries a message, and that's what the public wants." That settled it; the book was launched and the public are appreciating it."

By Little, Brown and Company.

Little, Brown & Co., the Boston publishers, anticipate one of the most prosperous autumn publishing seasons in the history of this old established but progressive house. With what may be termed a bumper crop of new books this firm announces that new printings of several different titles have already

NEW BOOKS

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The Mosher Books

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Thomas B. Mosher

PORTLAND, MAINE

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